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SUBJECT: USAID/OFDA ASSESSMENT OF JAVA EARTHQUAKE

REFS: A) JAKARTA 1467, B) JAKARTA 1481

Summary

¶1. The immediate humanitarian needs of an estimated 25,000 displaced individuals following the September 4 earthquake in central Java are mostly being met by government and non-governmental agencies. The earthquake-related damage to homes and infrastructure is relatively small, is manageable by local authorities, primarily affects the rural poor, and is likely to have minimal impact on regional food and livelihood security. The Government of Indonesia (GOI) Disaster Coordinating Agency (BNPB) has welcomed assistance from non-governmental organizations that already have resources in country, but is discouraging additional appeals to international donors. While response efforts have been effective and transparent, we believe there are significant needs for supporting early recovery and reconstruction planning. USAID has provided USD 100,000 to an NGO to help meet such needs with immediate non-food and shelter contributions to poor rural earthquake-affected populations, and will continue to monitor humanitarian conditions among earthquake-affected populations in the central Java region. End summary.

Background

¶2. On September 2, a magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck off the coast of the Indonesian island of Java, affecting ten districts, including the capital, Jakarta. Assessments of damage and loss of life continue, with the most current estimates indicating 73 individuals killed and approximately 88,000 people displaced as a result of the earthquake. Many of the displaced have moved in with relatives or friends in host family situations; however, relief workers estimate that more than 25,000 of the poorest earthquake-affected individuals are now in displacement camps. Although roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure remain intact, the GOI estimates that as many as 50,000 homes incurred some level of damage.

¶3. On September 5 and 6, a USAID/OFDA regional advisor assessed humanitarian conditions in the affected areas of central Java. The regional advisor conducted site visits to Pengalengan sub-district in Bandung District and Tasikmalaya District, indicated by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as the most-affected districts. The regional advisor conducted interviews with GOI officials, international donors, U.N. response agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs),

and beneficiaries. In addition, USAID/OFDA has provided USD 100,000 through USAID/Indonesia to an NGO to help meet the immediate emergency non-food and shelter needs of earthquake-affected populations.

Current Situation

¶4. OCHA reports an immediate and extensive response for earthquake-affected populations by government and non-governmental organizations. The U.N. World Food Program reports that the GOI has dispatched mobile kitchens and that those displaced by the earthquake are receiving the sufficient daily kilocalorie requirements; however, ration compositions vary by location. The GOI has released stocks from the government warehousing system (Bulog), and numerous private organizations (business and religious charities) are delivering food to affected individuals. The USAID/OFDA regional advisor confirmed that beneficiaries had adequate access to food in three of the displaced camps in Pengalengan Sub-district.

¶5. The GOI and Red Cross have provided tents to meet emergency shelter needs. To ease crowding in some locations, the Red Cross representative in Pengalengan reported that an additional 1,500 tents were in route to the districts. NGOs also confirmed that the GOI and Red Cross had distributed hygiene kits, blankets, tarpaulins, and kitchen sets. Affected populations reported to the USAID/OFDA regional advisor that access to water and latrines were sufficient, and they were receiving some

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level of non-food item support. The district hospital in Tasikmalaya reported numerous people treated for injury following the earthquake; however, health workers noted that no material spike in morbidity occurred following the event. GOI health officials indicated there are high levels of awareness about hygiene and self-protection in the Javanese population and that sufficient medical staff and medicines were available in the district.

Damage to Homes and Infrastructure

¶6. The official number of damaged or destroyed homes varies greatly by district, and there is considerable debate in the field about what constitutes earthquake damage, which centers on concerns for compensation. As of September 6, the GOI reported that 31,778 homes were severely damaged and 22,453 homes were moderately damaged. Local government officials report that assessments are ongoing and that a final number of damaged homes will be ready on September 14. The NGO Habitat for Humanity reported that the GOI Ministry of Housing is considering paying USD 4,000 to each affected household for reconstruction activities; however, USAID/OFDA was unable to confirm this. The USAID/OFDA regional advisor visited numerous affected homes in two districts and noted that damage assessments were highly subjective. Several homes that had completely collapsed were obvious losses; however, residents in other homes who pointed out chipped plaster or missing roof tiles were also claiming their home was no longer safe to live in. (Note: Following the devastating 2004 tsunami, the GOI compensated tsunami victims with cash payments, and many in central Java expect the same. End note).

¶7. The regional advisor did not see or hear of any reports of damage to agriculture or the market sectors. The largely agricultural-based economy appeared robust in all areas visited in preparation for the September planting season. Farmers in the affected area spoke more about recent dry conditions as their greatest concern. Markets

were open and busy at all the sites visited and there was no indication of price inflation for staple commodities following the earthquake.

18. The damage to homes from the earthquake clearly affected the poor in a disproportionate measure. While there are signs of collapsed porches, fallen retaining walls, and cracked plaster along the roadways, the regional advisor found the most acute damage in the poor semi-urban and rural dwellings of subsistence farming families. Many of the structures destroyed appear to be built without compliance to building codes and the minimum of construction materials or engineering skills. There is no uniformity to the damage, as it was common to find several houses grouped together with all intact except one entirely collapsed structure in the middle of the group. The head of the Indonesian Red Cross office described the damage as another crisis for the poor and confirmed that questionably constructed homes and vulnerable locations bore a disproportionate amount of the recent damage. The regional advisor did not receive reports of any bridges or roads that remained closed due to the earthquake.

International and GOI Assistance

19. OCHA reported that although the GOI appreciated the assistance of the UN and international NGOs to the crisis, the BNPB has instructed the relief community to program only response resources already in Indonesia, discouraging UN and NGO representatives from seeking additional funds from international donors. OCHA reported that a USD 2 million emergency response fund is ready, if needed, and that they are not planning to appeal for additional international funds. Several international NGOs reported receiving private response funds from their headquarters. The USAID/OFDA regional advisor spoke with representatives from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) also assessing field damages, who both reported that there were no plans to provide funding for the emergency phase of the earthquake response. On September 3, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono addressed the nation about the earthquake, committed USD

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500,000 to immediate response efforts, and reiterated that there was no need for further international assistance. In addition, the Ministry of National Education has committed USD 2.2 million to reconstruct and repair damaged schools.

110. The American Chamber of Commerce and USAID/Indonesia have established a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on disasters. Though the formal period of operations under this MOU has not yet begun, AMCHAM and two of its members requested information so that they can provide appropriate and timely non-food item support. We believe this is the beginning of a mutually beneficial collaboration that will grow and increasingly support Indonesia's needs.

Reconstruction

111. Although numbers are not yet finalized, there is a potential that 30,000 new homes will be needed, primarily for poor and subsistence-level families. With the exception of an unverified report of a compensation package from the Ministry of Housing, there is little information in the field indicating what is planned for the reconstruction phase. Local government representatives and the Indonesian Red Cross explained that the emergency phase would continue until September 14, after which provincial officials would meet to outline the next steps related to

early recovery and reconstruction. Many earthquake-affected families believe reimbursement payments will be forthcoming from the government for reconstruction. The USAID/OFDA regional advisor sees a delayed reconstruction effort as the greatest risk to the affected population. If a reconstruction program is not quickly forthcoming, many of the poor are likely to languish in the current displacement centers, dependent upon a fatigued humanitarian support effort.

Conclusions and Recommendations

¶12. Government and non-governmental agencies are addressing the food and non-food humanitarian needs of those displaced by the earthquake. WFP reports that sufficient kilocalories are reaching the affected and government health officials report no significant spike in morbidities following the earthquake.

¶13. Damage from the earthquake disproportionately affected the poor in the region. Poor construction methods, disregard of building codes and buildings of considerable age contributed to a lack of uniformity of earthquake destruction. There are no reports of road or bridge closures in the affected area and the vast majority of homes and business are unaffected.

¶14. The GOI has welcomed the assistance to earthquake victims from the U.N. and NGOs that already have resources in Indonesia. The Government has asked the national and international assistance community not to appeal to international donors for additional earthquake victim assistance.

¶15. There is little public information on plans for early recovery and reconstruction assistance for a potential 30,000 homes that will need to rebuild following the earthquake. Many earthquake-affected families believe reimbursement payments will be forthcoming from the government for reconstruction.

¶16. Although the GOI and humanitarian agencies have addressed the immediate humanitarian needs of earthquake-affected populations in Java, USAID/OFDA's primary concern is the lack of public planning for reconstruction of homes for the displaced and the potential that affected individuals, many of them the poorest and most vulnerable, may languish in displacement camps with waning humanitarian support. USAID/OFDA will continue to monitor humanitarian conditions in the affected regions of Java in coordination with USAID/Indonesia and the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.

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